



20 February 2023

Select Committee on Australia's Disaster Resilience  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Chair,

**RE: Select Committee on Australia's Disaster Resilience**

The St Vincent de Paul Society National Council of Australia ('the Society') welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to this inquiry. The Society is a lay Catholic charitable organisation that comprises over 45,000 volunteers and members and 6,000 employees who provide on the ground assistance across Australia. Our members and volunteers work directly with those in need by giving them a hand up so they can achieve their full potential.

*Background*

The Society has an extensive history of providing assistance in response to disasters through the emergency, recovery and rebuilding phases. This assistance is provided largely by our members and volunteers who often reside in, or have a close connection with, the community they serve, as well as by our staff. The Society receives Commonwealth and state/territory grant funding and donations to deliver a range of emergency relief, accommodation and support services. A description of assistance provided by stage of relief is at **Attachment A**.

The Society delivers services with minimal overheads due to its large volunteer base in all states and territories and can mobilise resources quickly in the aftermath of disasters (for example, Black Friday bushfires, 2011 Brisbane floods, 2018 Cyclone Debbie, 2019 Townsville and NW Qld Floods, 2019-21 Drought Assistance, 2021 Black Summer Bushfires and 2022 Qld and NSW floods). The Society works closely with all levels of government agencies, first responders, other charities, industry/business, and education, health and housing/accommodation sectors to bring together service responses that address people's needs. Devastating loss often involves all aspects of a person's life and multi-agency responses. A recent case study of the flood response in Queensland is at **Attachment B**.

*Learnings from previous inquiries*

The Society has prepared submissions to recent inquiries into various natural disasters and emergency responses namely:

- [Emergency Response Fund Amendment](#) (Disaster Ready Fund) Bill 2022 (October 2022)
- [National Emergency Declaration Act 2020](#) (March 2021)
- [Second submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the lessons to be learned in relation to the Australian bushfire season 2019-20](#) (January 2021)
- First [Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the lessons to be learned in relation to the Australian bushfire seasons 2019-20](#) (May 2020)
- [Royal Commission on National Natural Disaster Arrangements 2020 \(April 2020\)](#)

Rather than reiterate the content of these submissions, the Society has called for:

- Improved coordination of services at all levels and across all agencies
  - This ensures no gaps or duplication of services and a clear understanding by agencies of their roles and responsibilities which, in turn, streamlines service response and improves effectiveness of referrals.

- Improved case management
  - This is essential because without it, the onus is on the individual to navigate their way through a myriad of government, not for profit and other services. It is unreasonable to expect everyone to be able to do this, particularly at a time when normal processes/telecommunications are disrupted, and people have just experienced a traumatic event.
 

Case management is essential to ensure everyone who needs help is identified and gets it in a timely manner. Further, our experience has shown that access to case managers should not be limited to connection through a website, as some people are reluctant to engage and may take many months to do so.
- Improved information on available services
  - The amount and type of assistance available to people in affected Local Government Areas (LGAs) is overwhelming and requires navigating multiple websites. Ideally, all information (Cwlth, state, local payments, infrastructure, agriculture, business support, health services, accommodation, education and community support services) should be accessible through the one, central hub.
 

The onus should be on agencies to provide this information, and not on the individual (person) to know where to go to get it. Our experience is that the average person does not distinguish between services or payments funded by the Commonwealth, state or local government. Such knowledge certainly should not be expected of a person during a crisis.
- Improved planning information
  - Time is of the essence when responding to disasters. Real-time data that provides information on the scale of the disaster is essential to inform planning and mobilise resources quickly and effectively. Some disasters are very localised and it is difficult to understand the exact nature of it without detailed data. For example, the number of houses, farms, businesses, infrastructure and outbuildings damaged or destroyed by location would improve the planning of service responses.
 

Previously, this information was either not publicly released or only done so very late in the process. Simply listing the disaster type by LGA does not assist with planning purposes. The data currently available through data.gov.au does not list the number of disaster payments by LGA, which would enable planners to assess the volume of need by location. Finally, the identification and mapping of areas by level of risk is also essential for planning purposes, particularly capacity building, readiness and resilience training.
  - The Royal Commission was advised by Services Australia that there may be opportunity to 'harness real time geospatial mapping to assist streamlining claims and determine eligibility around the proximity of an applicant's principal place of residence to areas burnt by bushfires'. The Digital Transformation Agency's 'National Map', which allows public access to geospatial datasets uploaded by public and private sectors, could be part of that solution.<sup>i</sup> We welcome any work undertaken by Government to improve these capacities.
- Improved funding of capacity building and resilience activities
  - In the past, the majority of government funding has been dedicated to the disaster response. While this is essential, a proactive as well as reactive approach should be adopted. Funding for community capacity building and resilience training (in addition to management, containment and other risk minimalisation activities) is essential given the predicted increase in extreme weather events.
  - The Society agrees with the importance of addressing the social impacts of disaster. We have community development officers on the ground working with communities to do this work and it currently does not attract government funding.
- Improved information sharing
- People experiencing trauma should only have to tell their story once. Unfortunately, those who attended Recovery Centres in the past had to retell their story multiple times, depending on who they approached and the complexity of their needs. There was no way to share information between different government agencies, charities and businesses. If a person has consented to share their personal information for the purposes of receiving assistance, privacy laws and processes should

be in place to facilitate this. People having to retell their story over and over, at a time when they are vulnerable, retraumatises them.

- Privacy obligations mean government and non-government organisations are not able to provide the collected personal information to another recovery organisation, even if the personal information allows the second organisation to assess eligibility for their services. This is further complicated in national disasters, where some state and territory privacy legislation restricts cross-border information disclosure.
- The Royal Commission heard that privacy legislation at state and federal levels, constitutions of different agencies and operating governance arrangements can also be barriers to information sharing. In January 2020, the Attorney-General made an emergency declaration under the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* which permitted Australian Government agencies and private sector organisations subject to the Act to collect, use or disclose personal information that they might not otherwise be able to do for purposes related to the emergency or disaster. The Royal Commission also found that many organisations were unaware of this declaration.<sup>ii</sup>
- We strongly support the Royal Commission’s recommendation that: ‘Appropriate sharing of personal information Australian, state and territory governments should ensure that personal information of individuals affected by a natural disaster is able to be appropriately shared between all levels of government, agencies, insurers, charities and organisations delivering recovery services, taking account of all necessary safeguards to ensure the sharing is only for recovery purposes.’<sup>iii</sup>
- We welcome the National Cabinet’s adoption of the Intergovernmental agreement on data sharing between Commonwealth and State and Territory governments, committing all jurisdictions to share data as a default position, where it can be done securely, safely, lawfully and ethically. We note work is underway with states and territories to establish agreed data sharing principles in relation to disaster impacts and recovery data, intended to sit under the Intergovernmental agreement on data sharing.<sup>iv</sup>

We welcome and are active participants in the Tell Us Once initiative.

- Streamlined grant administration
  - Emergencies hit anywhere, at any time and often with limited warning. However, the current *Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines* and the *Commonwealth Procurement Rules* do not accommodate these events. They assume many years are available to develop grant guidelines and conduct assessment processes. This limits the organisations that can be funded by the Commonwealth to respond to disasters to those who have an existing grant agreement in place (administered by variation). This is less than ideal particularly if another organisation has a strong presence in the community and would be better placed to deliver services.

While we understand the value and importance of open and transparent government accountability, as per the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (Cth)*, exemptions should be reviewed to enable prompt Commonwealth Government funding of organisations that are based in, or have a close connection with, disaster-affected communities. The Government could also consider an open tender process to establish a standing panel of providers, especially in high risk areas, in preparation for future emergency responses.

- Streamlined government reporting
  - Even those organisations with existing grant agreements in place who received additional funding were required to complete additional weekly reporting throughout the emergency period to multiple government agencies, even though this was not specified in grant variations. This diverted administrative resources away from other important activities and no additional funding was provided to cover the cost. For example, registered charities already meet ACNC reporting requirements and if in receipt of government funding, meet those requirements as well. Understandably, existing Commonwealth reporting requirements were six monthly and more frequent reporting was required during the emergency period. However, if a national online data system had been available, it would have assisted those who needed help (by discussing their needs once), and the agencies providing it (by being able to identify what had already been provided, what referrals should be made and only reporting once). It would also have kept the Government informed of activity levels by location, vital to government processes and planning.

- Improved avenues/channels for community informed input and responses
  - The Society's experience is that the most effective service responses are those identified by the local community impacted by a natural disaster. It is essential that local residents, businesses, councils, schools, health services etc have an opportunity to provide input to planning and service responses, particularly during recovery and rebuilding phases.

#### *Recent actions*

The Society commends the following activities or commitments recently undertaken by Government:

- The NEMA website
  - We hope that this will operate as a central information and resource hub. The website appears to contain payment and service provision by disaster types, level of government and LGA but little information on other service providers. We note that the Department of Home Affairs has a Direct Assist website and assume the information on that site is also accessible on the NEMA website.
- NEMA Tell Us Once Program
  - Although it is early days, we support the progress made with respect to developing a national system that will hopefully be used by all agencies to share information on people seeking assistance, including services and payments already received. We understand that the work aims to better understand the legislative, technical and safety challenges of data sharing in order to reduce the burden on disaster affected people to repeatedly provide the same information to multiple agencies.
- Recovery Support Officer
  - We hope these positions will be mobilised during natural disasters, from the emergency stage through to recovery and rebuilding. Initial access should not be limited to contact through the NEMA website. Further, information obtained by the officers should be uploaded to the national database to facilitate information sharing and coordinate service responses.
- Disaster Recovery Fund
  - We welcome the opening of round one (2023-24) and the inclusion of capacity building of businesses, community sector organisations and/or at-risk communities to improve their preparedness and resilience to the impacts of future disasters (stream 2). Resilience funding is essential because the impacts of disaster are not limited to the costs of damaged property, infrastructure or facilities. The social impacts of disaster (health and well-being, employment, education and safety issues) are greater than the physical costs of restoration of assets. However, it is not clear how much funding is available under the Fund for this purpose. An inclusive approach to ensure marginalised people and people most at risk benefit from the Disaster Ready Fund in a culturally safe, systematic, and meaningful way, is also required.

#### *Further action needed*

To summarise, we believe that if the following items were addressed, Australia's capacity to plan for and manage disasters would be improved. These include

- Review of emergency exemptions under the Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines and the Commonwealth Procurement Rules.
- Establishment of a standing panel of emergency response providers, covering a range of services (emergency relief, emergency accommodation, infrastructure supplies, etc) particularly for high-risk areas.
- Streamlined government reporting for organisations in receipt of Commonwealth funds which should be enabled through the Tell Us Once Program, so that funded agencies only need report once.
- Public awareness education. It was apparent during the Back Summer bushfires that the community's knowledge of how the charity sector operates especially with respect to how donations are managed and the time involved in providing service responses was limited. Registered charities must comply with various ACNC and government funding reporting requirements. Raising community awareness of the timing of service responses and how the charity sector operates

should be managed by NEMA and the ACNC.

- An update of the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience. This document describes disaster resilience as the collective responsibility of all levels of government, businesses, the non-government sector and individuals but was written back in 2011.
- Simplification of the many governance and operational documents that relate to the management of disasters. The Australian Disaster Recovery Framework (2022) recognises the importance of community-led recovery and that the local community's needs drive a well-coordinated recovery effort. However, the Framework makes references to many other materials including
  - Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub
  - The National Principles for Disaster Recovery
  - The Australian Disaster Resilience Community Recovery Handbook
  - The Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework
  - A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs
  - Australian Disaster Resilience Lessons Management Handbook
  - Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection.
- Clearer operational details on the point at which charitable organisations are involved in both the initial crisis management phase and recovery phase. The Framework itself contains only one paragraph on NGOs (para 2.7.2), acknowledging they are critical partners in effective recovery and states that 'Effective partnerships need the roles, responsibilities and capabilities of NGOs to be included in local, jurisdictional and national emergency management plans'.<sup>v</sup> Membership contains the Australian Red Cross only.

We note a commitment to outlining responsibilities and identifying triggers for when to involve organisations including Emergency Relief and Food Relief providers but it is difficult to identify within all of these governance documents where this has been addressed. Consequently, there appears to be insufficient information to help operationalise and coordinate NGO responses within the disaster response framework.

- An update on progress made on the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (in the next National Action Plan) and in response to the midterm review of the Australia's National Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission.

Yours sincerely



Mr Toby oConnor  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## **Attachment A**

The Society is involved in all three stages of disaster response to varying degrees depending on location and nature of disaster – from emergency (6 weeks), to recovery (6 weeks to 3 months) and then rebuilding (3 months to two years). However, the Society is not a first responder.

From previous experience, around half of donations received is likely to be spent during the emergency stage. The remaining 50 per cent will be spent during the recovery stage (around 30 per cent) and the rebuilding stage (around 20 per cent). However, this is indicative only and depends on the nature and timeframe of the disaster and the community affected.

If we are unable to assist on the ground, we attend Recovery Centres or collection sites or offer help by phone or through one of our outlets.

- We are acutely aware that individuals and communities respond differently to disasters – they may spend more or less time in each stage for many reasons including the timing of the disaster, the extent to which family and friends are impacted, community connectedness, the amount, type and accessibility of essential and support services and remoteness.
- People also recover in different ways and in their own time – they will seek help when they are ready, sometimes months after the disaster.

Our response is tailored to what is needed at the time. We are committed to being flexible and responsive.

Vinnies uses donations in the **emergency stage** to:

- provide food, clothing and essential items to people who have lost everything
- pay bills and unexpected expenses
- provide vouchers or credit to enable people to make immediate purchases of essential items
- provide help with transport, medical and veterinary bills, and
- provide or refer people to crisis accommodation when homes are destroyed or damaged or when people are evacuated.

Vinnies uses donations in the **recovery stage** to:

- help people whose homes have been damaged or destroyed to set up again with bedding, furniture and appliances
- help people to re-establish vital infrastructure or re-establish local businesses, sometimes in partnership with other organisations (such as provision of tools, outbuildings, fencing and equipment)
- help people to access essential services, sometimes in partnership with other organisations (such as provision of water tanks, generators/power sources and telecommunications)
- provide longer-term accommodation options while people are rebuilding or re-locating, and
- provide or refer people to specialised counselling, support, health or legal services.

Vinnies uses donations in the **rebuilding stage** to:

- help communities identify their longer-term needs (such as through a locally based community development officers)
- provide assistance with rebuilding communities through grant rounds which support projects with a community-wide benefit (such as restoring community halls, sportsground, school gardens and other shared facilities), and
- support communities to run their own community development activities ( this could include community training and information sessions on topics such as parenting, financial literacy etc)



## Attachment B

St Vincent de Paul Qld (SVDP Qld) is not a first responder organisation but is well practiced in helping people recover from disaster events. SVDP Qld has a large volunteer membership and does not generally have the capacity to organise emergency response efforts immediately after a disaster event due mainly to the majority of members being elderly. The organisation of emergency shelters and the associated support services is not a capability that SVDP Qld is equipped to provide. However, some immediate disaster response support was provided by Gympie SVDP members who provided food parcels for helicopter delivery to some properties that were isolated during the SE Queensland floods in February 2022.

SVDP Qld's main capability to work with people affected by disaster to rebuild and recover. This occurs through volunteer members who are generally located in the disaster affected areas and are familiar with the areas impacted by disaster. SVDP Qld's experience is that demand for assistance generally occurs from 3 weeks after a disaster and in the following proportions.

Time Period	Assistance Type	Amount
3 weeks to 3 months	Assistance with food and to replace clothes, beds, washers and fridges etc	Up to \$3000
3 to 9 months	Assistance with larger expenses - e.g. costs incurred for short term accommodation, replacement of household items and furniture, repair of flooded cars / caravans, minor home repairs.	Up to \$10,000
9 months to 2 years	Assistance with structural repairs to houses, retaining walls and property drainage	Up to \$50,000

SVDP Qld's assistance response is to generally pay cash to families for assistance up to \$10,000. The payment of cash:

- enables families to prioritise their recovery needs - e.g. relocate or stay and replace
- removes SVDP personnel from the coordination of payment to suppliers for goods and their delivery to clients
- expedites the approval and payment process

In the 3 weeks to 3 months after a disaster, the demand for assistance from local volunteers is high and the ability to quickly process and deliver assistance is key to ensure disaster affected families have access to support quickly and volunteers are not overwhelmed by requests from people waiting for assistance.

Where requests for assistance is over \$10,000, SVDP QLD allocates more experienced volunteers to assess the recovery needs. People requesting assistance in this category are:

- not insured and are looking to undertake structural rebuild and recovery tasks themselves
- are insured but have been denied payment or have received partial payment from their insurer that does not enable them to recover

Some people in this category are also eligible for assistance from government structural rebuilding or relocation grants.

### Response to SEQ flood, February 2022

[South-east Queensland battered by severe weather, floods as system lingers over Brisbane - ABC News](#)



[South-east Queensland battered by severe weather, floods as system lingers over Brisbane](#)

Hundreds of schools will be closed across south-east Queensland on Monday and people have been encouraged to work from home as a deadly weather system continues to lash the state.

[www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au)

SVDP QLD has distributed \$2.075 million in payments to more than 300 flood affected families to 31 January 2023. Small payments below \$1,000 are approved within local regions (called conferences). Payments over \$1,000 are reviewed and processed through a governance process involving the State office administration team. A list of payments to flood affected families by SE Queensland region is below:

**SE QLD Flood payments by region at 31 January 2023**

Region	Assistance Paid (\$)	No. payments
BRISBANE (CITY, REDCLIFFE, NORTH & SOUTHERN SUBURBS)	67,000	21
WESTERN BRISBANE(OTHER)	387,883	60
IPSWICH	931,120	136
GOLD COAST & LOGAN	126,251	25
CABOOLTURE	154,825	24
GYMPIE	153,499	27
SUNSHINE COAST (OTHER)	12,004	6
TOOWOOMBA & OTHER	12,000	2
<b>SUBTOTAL &gt;\$1,000</b>	<b>1,844,582</b>	<b>301</b>

**Case Study: Goodna (Ipswich region)**

Goodna is located approximately 30 km west of the Brisbane CBD on the Brisbane Rivers. In February 2022, large areas of the region were flooded, including areas that were extensively damaged by flood in 2011.

The following helps to explain the flood impact in Goodna and the Ipswich region and SVDP Qld's response:

**3 March 2022**

[Queensland floods: As the clean-up begins in Goodna, many say they can't do it alone - ABC News](#)





[As the clean-up begins in Goodna, many say they can't do it alone](#)

Four days after an engorged Brisbane River forced its way into the streets and homes of Goodna, residents returned to see what was left of their homes. Now they ask for help.

[www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au)

SVDP Qld volunteers based in Goodna and Ipswich start to assist people with food and vouchers for clothes. Some volunteers start to assist with the cleaning of houses. Other SVDP Goodna and Ipswich volunteers were flooded themselves.

**28 March 2022**

[Family returns to 'shell of a home' in Goodna to face another painful rebuild after flooding - ABC News](#)



[After the deluge: Flood-weary mum left to rebuild her home — again](#)

Every time it rains, Terri's kids fear their house will flood again. Ideally, they'd like to move, but it's not financially viable so, like many south-east Queenslanders, they are returning to their home to rebuild.

[www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au)

SVDP volunteers start to get requests for assistance from families who were impacted from flood. Many people who request help are already known to the Society. Most of the requests for assistance are from renters and SVDP pays between \$3,000 to \$6,000 - more money is paid to families with children.

**7 June 2022**

[Three months after flooding in south-east Queensland, residents are still in the dark about relief funding - ABC News](#)



[When Paul's home flooded there was plenty of help to clean the mud. He says 10 days later everything changed](#)

After receiving more than 2,600 applications for financial assistance, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority — which is in charge of flood recovery funding — says there is no timeline for when more information may be available.

[www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au)

SVDP advertises on the radio for people to call the helpline if they have been impacted by flood and requests for assistance greatly increase. SVDP volunteers are told to advise flood impacted people to contact the Queensland Government's Community Recovery hotline. There are a large number of families who are not eligible for government support payments - mainly New Zealand and Pacific Islander citizens of which there is a large population in the region. At this stage, SVDP is making payments to people to assist them replace household items.

**1 August 2022**

[Residents of flood-affected Goodna to be initial priority for buy-back scheme, Reconstruction Authority says they will not be rushed - ABC News](#)



['We are not fixing it': First priority area chosen for Queensland's flood buy-back scheme](#)

More than five months after the February flood disaster, more than 4,250 people across Queensland have registered their interest to have their homes raised, rebuilt or voluntary bought back.

[www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au)

SVDP is working closely with Goodna Neighbourhood Centre to encourage people to register with the Queensland Government's Community Recovery. The Community Recovery team also refer people to SVDP for assistance, including people living in caravans and relocatable homes impacted by the flood where government assistance is not available.

**3 September 2022**

[Six months on from the Goodna and Brisbane floods, the neighbours of Mill Street have discovered a resilience they never knew they had - ABC News](#)



[Every home in Mill Street flooded six months ago, but the looters keep on coming back](#)

Mill Street in Goodna has scars. Some are obvious, like the shells of cars scattered in yards. But others are harder to see, like the fear of looters or the uncertainty of what the future holds.

[www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au)

After six months, requests for replacement of household items are starting to reduce and requests for assistance to repair houses starts to occur. Some people who are not insured may be eligible for the Qld Government's structural repair or property buy-back grants but are keen to start work to make their homes safe to live. SVDP makes some payments to repair kitchens and bathrooms at this stage. Experienced SVDP volunteers start to get involved with people requiring large amounts of assistance for structural repair.

The case of Allan (ABC news, 3/9/22) is a familiar story. SVDP assisted another elderly man who was living under his house without electricity since his house was damaged in the 2011 floods. His wife had left him some years after the 2011 floods but he remained living in the damaged house, repairing the house slowly from his pension funds. SVDP gave him some money and encouraged him to move to another place to live. SVDP understands that he had applied for the Qld Government's property buy-back scheme and is currently unaware if he has been successful.

**November 2022 to January 2023**

The Queensland Government's Community Recovery team expands their resources as more people reach out for structural assistance or buy-back grants. SVDP Queensland closes assistance for household items and moves to accepting assistance for structural repairs to properties only.

Experienced SVDP volunteer Sean estimates that he has helped every resident in one flood impacted street in Goodna - approximately 30 families. SVDP's volunteers work with some flood affected residents to navigate the government grant system and to organise builder's quotes as some people do not have

the capability to do this themselves. Accepting money from the government to buy-back or to stay and repair their property is a very difficult decision for some people, especially when there is uncertainty as to where they will live due to the high demand for rental properties.

### Recommendations for future disasters (Qld)

- Community Recovery hotline and website is advertised on mainstream media. The Community Recovery information that was available on websites and the app was easy to understand but many people were unaware of what was available and how to access assistance. While there was social media advertising and potentially newspaper advertising, SVDP Qld is unaware of TV or radio advertising to advise people to register with Community Recovery. SVDP advertised on radio to contact the helpline approximately one month after the SE Qld flood disaster and received a large increase in requests for assistance. SVDP Qld advertised on radio for several weeks that help was available from approximately one month after the SE Qld flood disaster and received a large response for assistance. In our assessment process, SVDP Qld asked people if they had registered with Community Recovery and a large proportion had not and were unaware of the Community Recovery services up to 9 months after the SE Qld flood disaster.
- Disaster Response centres are established in easy to access locations and are adequately resourced. SVDP has received generally good feedback about the service from Neighbourhood Centres (NCQ - Neighbourhood Centres Queensland). However, for people who had never needed to access social support services, an understanding of what the Neighbourhood Centre offered was unclear to them. Further, mobile or pop-up disaster support centres in shopping centres or near train stations could improve visibility to people about how to access disaster support services. Combined with a community BBQ or offering food or petrol vouchers, these mobile or pop-up centres could help direct people to other services or organisations.



#### [NCQ - Neighbourhood Centres Queensland](http://ncq.org.au)

NCQ is the peak body for Neighbourhood and Community Centres across Queensland. We represent a membership of over 130 community-based organisations.

[ncq.org.au](http://ncq.org.au)

- Case management of individuals with complex needs would assist charity providers. SVDP assistance is generally provided by volunteers who have limited capacity or skills to work with people with complex needs. SVDP volunteers can be part of disaster recovery solution for people who often require support from multiple agencies. Recently, there has been more of a partnership approach with Qld Community Recovery who have increased case management personnel in the last few months.
- A disaster management database may help with the sharing of basic information. SVDP Queensland has agreed a form with Qld Community Recovery to share limited client information rather than ask the client to repeat their information again. Sharing this information in electronic form to multiple service providers would reduce administration and improve response times. Further, an understanding of whether other charities were also assisting would avoid service duplication.
- Psychological resilience training be made available for volunteers in disaster locations. Generally, there are few resources for volunteers to access psychological services and resilience training after disasters. Volunteer burn-out is a problem after disasters, especially in drought areas where there is demand for help over a prolonged period.

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- <sup>i</sup> Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report. 28 October 2020. Accessed at: <https://naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/royal-commission-national-natural-disaster-arrangements-report>. Paragraph 22.66, p.469.
- <sup>ii</sup> *ibid.*, paragraphs 22.55-22.58, pp. 467-469.
- <sup>iii</sup> *ibid.*, Recommendation 22.2, p.469.
- <sup>iv</sup> Australia's Disaster Recovery Framework. Version 3.0. October 2022. Accessed at: [extension://elhekieabhbkmcefcobjddigjcaadp/https://nema.gov.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/Australian%20Disaster%20Recovery%20Framework%20V3\\_0.pdf](https://nema.gov.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/Australian%20Disaster%20Recovery%20Framework%20V3_0.pdf). p.26
- <sup>v</sup> *ibid.*, p.24